



**U.S. EMBASSY – BAGHDAD**  
**News Release**



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**Iraqi Baseball Team to Visit the United States**

The U.S. Embassy in Baghdad hosted coaches and players of the Iraqi Baseball Team March 31 to celebrate their scheduled trip to the United States and to receive much-needed equipment that Major League Baseball (MLB) donated to Iraq. Seventeen players from Maysan, Diwaniya, and Baghdad will travel to the United States May 3-13 as part of a sports diplomacy program funded by the U.S. Department of State's SportsUnited office. The 12 young athletes and the five coaches will participate in skills clinics, watch a game at Camden Yards, and meet All-Star Ken Griffey Jr. As part of its outreach and development, Major League Baseball donated 27 boxes of bats, helmets, balls, rule books and other equipment to the Iraqi players.

In remarks before the practice, U.S. Ambassador Christopher R. Hill said, "We are committed to building a long-term relationship with the Iraqi people and our shared love of sports provides a solid connection. It's wonderful to see this group of young Iraqis heading off to the United States to improve their skills and learn about American culture and in particular two great sports, softball and baseball."

After an embassy luncheon, the Iraqi baseball and softball players practiced with Embassy staff who share their love of the game. Events such as this help fulfill the goal of cultural cooperation envisaged in the U.S.-Iraqi Strategic Framework Agreement and reaffirm the U.S. commitment to building long-lasting ties in culture and sports between the Iraqi and American peoples.

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